

SAF/LLZ (Legislative Research Team)

LATHAM, Thomas (Republican)
Representative, 4th District, Iowa
Elected 1994 to the 104th Congress
Reelected to succeeding Congresses



BACKGROUND

Born: Hampton, Iowa - 14 July 1948

Home: Alexander, Iowa

Marital status: Married (Kathy) - 3 children

Religion: Lutheran

Education: Wartburg College, 1967; Iowa State U, 1967-70

Military: None

Profession: Seed company executive

Political: Defeated Sheila McGuire (D) in the 1994 general election with 61% of the vote for the seat of Rep Fred Grandy (R) who ran unsuccessfully for Governor. Ran unopposed in 1998 and reelected in 2000 with 69% of the vote. In 2002, won in the redistricted 4th with 55% of the vote.

Rep Latham calls himself a progressive conservative and has worked to reform Congress through an overhaul of the budget process, a reduction in the number of committees and staff, and calls for rotating chairmanships, term limits and a line-item veto. Emphasizes the agricultural concerns of his district's farmers. Is co-owner of a family seed company. In the 104th Congress was a member of the Republican Defense Working Group which sought ways to make the Pentagon more efficient. (The Hill, 10Apr96, p.9).

In the 105th Congress, appointed to the Appropriations Committee and gave up his seats on Agriculture and Transportation. Opposed environmental regulations and infringements on property rights that he viewed as threatening to small farmers. Also became involved in immigration matters, successfully arguing for more INS presence in his district. On defense matters continued to display a questioning attitude about some weapons systems. Joined 53 other House GOP members in June 1997 to support cuts in funds for the B-2 bomber program. Also voted to cut funding for the space station.

In the 106th Congress has expressed concerns about Chinese espionage at DoE weapons labs, questioned the Clinton Administration's commitment to improving US embassy security, and sponsored legislation to protect sensitive encryption technology from being transferred to other countries. Also cosponsored a bill to provide special compensation to certain severely disabled military retirees. Offered successful amdt to the Commerce Appns bill that made available \$4 million for the National Veterans Business Development Corporation. Participated in a Congressional delegation to Estonia to examine the work of the US embassy in Tallinn; the delegation also visited other locations to examine the overseas operations of the Depts of State, Commerce, and Justice. Believed that a plan under consideration to restructure the Air National Guard in Iowa would benefit the Sioux City region. The proposal would phase out F-16 fighter planes at the 185th Fighter Wing and transition to KC-135s. Said "we need to look long-term in this situation to see what's best for the region and a tanker mission may well fit our needs."

For the 108th, his district, which was redrawn, is now more democratic. Prior to the 108th

Congress represented Sioux Gateway Airport (ANG).

Additional: Co-owner, Latham Seed Co. Owns and operates a farm in the district.

AF Bases: None

COMMITTEES

APPROPRIATIONS -- Subcs on Agriculture – Vice Chmn; Enegy & Water Development;
Homeland Security